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S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 KUWAIT 003618

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [KU](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAN](#) [RELATIONS](#)  
SUBJECT: ON IRAN, KUWAIT PREPARING CONTINGENCY PLANS AND  
BEEFING UP SECURITY; COULD SIGN NON-AGGRESSION AGREEMENT

REF: A. KUWAIT 3447  
[1](#)B. KUWAIT 2883

Classified By: DCM Matthew Tueller for reasons 1.4 (b) and (d)

[1](#)1. (S/NF) Summary: During a September 5 meeting, National Security Bureau (NSB) Iran analyst Ghanim Al-Otaibi told PolOff that the Kuwaiti government's (GOK) strategy for dealing with Iran covered three main areas: political, military, and internal security. According to Al-Otaibi, all government ministries were recently tasked to draft contingency plans to deal with NSB-developed scenarios related to Iran. Al-Otaibi said the GOK's primary domestic security concern was the possibility of Iranian-backed terrorist attacks, but the Government believed it had the situation under control. Al-Otaibi confirmed a recent report that negotiations on a number of bilateral issues between Kuwait and Iran had been "put on hold" until the nuclear issue was resolved. He also reported that Kuwait had drafted a Non-Aggression Agreement, which it would submit to Iran if tensions increased significantly. Al-Otaibi said the Government was "very disappointed" by the recent pro-Hizballah demonstrations in Kuwait and was planning to introduce legislation in the next parliamentary session to prevent similar demonstrations in the future. End summary.

[1](#)2. (S/NF) PolOff met September 5 with Ghanim Al-Otaibi (please protect), the sole Iran analyst at the National Security Bureau, the organization responsible for coordinating security and intelligence policy between Kuwaiti government agencies and ministries. (Comment: Former Minister of Energy Shaykh Ahmed Al-Fahd Al-Sabah's recent appointment as the new NSB President is likely to re-invigorate the organization and substantially increase its influence within the Government. End comment.) Al-Otaibi said Kuwait's strategy to deal with Iran covered three areas: political and military affairs, and internal security. Each ministry was recently tasked to form high-level internal committees to develop contingency plans to deal with NSB-developed scenarios related to Iran, he reported. Al-Otaibi cited as an example the Ministry of Communications being asked to identify possible backup communications systems in case Kuwait's communications were knocked out. He said most of these committees had already finished their work and added that the Kuwaiti military was separately developing its own contingency plans.

Kuwait Prepared to Face Internal Security Threats  
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[1](#)3. (S/NF) Al-Otaibi said Kuwait's primary Iran-related security concern was the possibility of Iranian-backed terrorist attacks in Kuwait, specifically by several radical Shi'a individuals linked to "Kuwaiti Hizballah." (Comment: "Kuwaiti Hizballah" is a pejorative term applied to

conservative Kuwaiti Shi'a primarily by their Sunni political opponents and Kuwait State Security (KSS). The National Islamic Alliance (NIA), a conservative Iran-leaning, Shi'a political association, is also sometimes referred to as "Kuwaiti Hizballah." End comment.) Contrary to most other contacts, Al-Otaibi claimed "Kuwaiti Hizballah" was a real organization with a clear leadership structure, though he stopped short of saying it had a militant wing. While concerned about this threat, Al-Otaibi emphasized that the GOK had the situation under control, noting that the KSS knew the "names and addresses" of these potentially dangerous Kuwaiti Shi'a and was "keeping a close eye on them." "If we need to, we are prepared to take drastic measures (against these individuals)," he said.

14. (S/NF) Al-Otaibi also noted that Kuwait recently implemented more robust security measures, including increasing the number of security personnel at vital installations and installing "more than 7,000" closed circuit television cameras at oil facilities and in public areas. He downplayed the likelihood of Shi'a militia groups in southern Iraq launching rocket attacks on Kuwait, saying the GOK was "not even considering this possibility." (Comment: This seems to somewhat contradict with Shaykh Ahmed Al-Fahd's request for information on Hizballah missile capabilities (ref A). End comment.)

#### Kuwait-Iran Bilateral Relations

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15. (S/NF) Al-Otaibi confirmed an August 29 report in the Arab Times (local English daily) that many bilateral issues between Kuwait and Iran, including negotiations over Kuwait importing water and natural gas from Iran, have been put "on

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hold" until the nuclear issue is resolved. He was unaware of an August 5 report in the Daily Star (local English daily) that negotiations over Iran joining Kuwait's fiber optics network were expected to be finalized "by early October." Al-Otaibi was also unaware of an August 16 article on the Iran Students News Agency website (www.isna.ir) that claimed a Kuwaiti company was one of three companies the Iranian government had allowed to purchase stocks on the Iranian Stock Exchange. After reviewing the reports, however, he downplayed them as evidence of "normal economic relations" between neighboring countries.

#### Possible Kuwait-Iran Non-Aggression Agreement

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16. (S/NF) According to Al-Otaibi, Kuwait has drafted a Non-Aggression Agreement, which it plans to submit to Iran "when the time is right." Al-Otaibi said the Iranians suggested such an agreement several times before, but the GOK always declined, saying it was unnecessary and would damage bilateral relations. The renewed interest in a Non-Aggression Agreement was due to the potential for increased tension if international sanctions are imposed on Iran, he explained.

#### GOK Disappointed by Pro-Hizballah Demonstrations

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17. (S/NF) Commenting on the recent pro-Hizballah/anti-American demonstrations in Kuwait (ref B), Al-Otaibi said the GOK was "very disappointed" to see Kuwaitis, "mainly Shi'a," carrying Hizballah flags and pictures of Hassan Nasrallah. He continued: "We (the GOK) see Hizballah as a terrorist organization and Nasrallah as a terrorist." Al-Otaibi claimed "Iran has agents in Kuwait" who were involved in organizing the demonstrations and specifically mentioned Sayed Mohammed Baqer Al-Mohri, Kuwait's leading Shi'a cleric. "We are certain that (Al-Mohri) is an agent of Iran and has taken orders directly from the Iranian regime," he said. According to Al-Otaibi,

Al-Mohri worked behind the scenes with Adnan Abdul Samad and Ahmed Lari, recently-elected, NIA-affiliated Members of Parliament who participated in the protests. (Comment: While the GOK may perceive Al-Mohri to be an Iranian agent, he is widely respected in Kuwait's Shi'a community where he plays a mediating role between the various Shi'a factions. Post has not seen any evidence to support the claim that he is secretly affiliated with Samad or Lari. End comment.)

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Al-Otaibi said the GOK was planning to introduce legislation during the next parliamentary session to prevent similar demonstrations, namely by placing greater restrictions on politically-themed public gatherings and by prohibiting "dual allegiances" (e.g. publicly displaying a photo of Nasrallah).

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